



**theme:** Salvation #4 – Faith / Works

**materials:** Pens, paper, friendship bracelet materials, bibles

## welcome

What is the biggest lie you ever told? What were the results of the lie?  
How do you feel about people who say one thing but do another, or whose lives don't match their words?  
Alternatively, try this exercise. Do you really trust each other? Then prove it by your actions. Stand in a smallish circle and put one person in the middle. Have them put their feet together and not move them. Then they should fall towards one of the people in the circle. That person stops them from falling, and then passes them to someone else in the circle, and so on and so on. If the person really trusts the group they will keep their feet rooted in place and their body straight.

## interact

In James 2:23, it says that Abraham was called God's friend. What does it mean to be a friend of God's? Would you consider yourself a friend of God? Write down all the qualities of friendship you can think of, see if and how they apply to your relationship with God, and thank Him for His friendship. Pray that God would help you to be a better friend to Him. What would it mean to be a better friend?  
If you really want to go crazy, get everyone to make a friendship bracelet representing their friendship with God.

## read

Read James 2:14-26 together.  
What do you think this passage is saying about salvation?  
Is James saying that mere belief in God's existence is not enough for salvation?  
Is he saying that we are saved by our good works? If yes, does that contradict other passages in the Bible that say we are saved by faith and not by our own deeds (like Romans 3:28, Galatians 2:15-16, Ephesians 2, etc...)  
If he's not saying that we can be saved by good works, then what is the connection between faith and works? Is faith any good without deeds?  
What are good deeds? Why are they so essential to a living faith?  
You might want to read through the Old Testament stories referenced in this passage (Abraham – Genesis 22:1-18, Rahab – Joshua 2:1-21), or have someone read them beforehand and sum them up for everyone in the cell.  
What do these two stories tell us about faith and works?  
What would it look like for your cell to live out the teachings of the James passage in your context?

## think

Look at the situation presented in verses 15-17. Have you ever seen people doing this, or have you ever done it yourself? What do you think the appropriate response would have been to seeing someone without clothes or food? Do you do this? Why or why not?



## live & pray

Do an honest evaluation of yourself, write it down if you have to. What parts of your life do not match up with what you say you believe? Where are you failing to live up to the calling of Christ in your life? What can be done about it?

## useful resources

Book: *Faithworks*, by Jim Wallis  
Website: [www.tearfund.org](http://www.tearfund.org)  
Song: *On the Turning Away*, Pink Floyd

## leader's guide

This has been a very troublesome passage for Christians. Is it really suggesting a salvation based on good works? Is it really saying that believing in God is not enough?

James is definitely saying that mere belief is not enough. He points out that the demons believe there is a God, and they shudder. There is a lot more to faith and Salvation than just accepting there is a God.

James seems to be suggesting that both faith and works are essential aspects of salvation. But that isn't troublesome unless you only view salvation as a one-time event, a mercy-seat type of encounter. Jesus is the only one who can save us, none of our good works can. But good works are fundamental to faith, to what it means to be saved. James is saying that faith without works is useless, just an intellectually acceptance of certain propositions, not true living faith which changes both us and the world. Good works is salvation and faith worked out over a lifetime. A saving faith is one that produces good deeds, which are acts of love.

**Both Abraham and Rahab were credited with righteousness because of their actions, not just their beliefs. Their actions proved their faith!**